

# Literacy for Healthy Childhood and Adolescence



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New Delhi



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## Foreword

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is the age of knowledge, and literacy is recognized as the key determinant in its acquisition. A literate population is essential for the overall development of the nation. India, a signatory to the global commitment of Education For All (EFA), has put in place several innovative schemes to achieve its EFA targets within the specified time frame. These include a renewed thrust on open and distance education with the aim of bringing out-of-school persons into the fold of education through equivalency programmes at different levels.

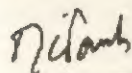
The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), which is the apex body for open and distance schooling in India, offers courses from primary to senior secondary levels.

NIOS has been associated with the task of developing the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) Kit. The Kit, conceptualized by UNESCO New Delhi, will go a long way in improving the quality of life of neo-literates and will ultimately contribute to national development.

The LIFE Kit will serve the learning needs of all persons, particularly girls and women, who aspire to continue their education through lifelong learning. It will also be useful for different regional groups who can adapt it to their own locally relevant cultural and linguistic contexts to contribute to their empowerment.

I am grateful to UNESCO New Delhi for partnering with NIOS in developing the LIFE Kit. I thank Ms Minja Yang, Director, and Dr. Huma Masood, Education Programme Officer, UNESCO for their cooperation in this venture. I also wish to express my appreciation to the writers and resource persons associated with this innovative project.

We hope that this LIFE Kit will meet the educational needs of neo-literates not only in India, but also in other developing countries.



**M. C. Pant**

*Chairman, NIOS*

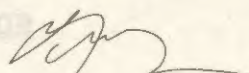
Literacy is not only a right: it is the foundation of all learning. Literacy brings profound individual and social benefits and leads to poverty reduction. Yet around the world, 103 million children are out of school and 771 million adults are illiterate, the majority of them girls and women.

The United Nations, through its Education For All (EFA) initiative, emphasizes action to provide quality education for all, targeted programmes for adult literacy and learning, and improved training for teachers.

In the current UN Literacy Decade (2003-2012), UNESCO has developed a major new strategy for achieving literacy for all: the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment, or LIFE. Linking literacy with gender, sustainable development, health and empowerment, LIFE works towards the achievement of several of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

As a major component of LIFE, UNESCO New Delhi has partnered with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to prepare this LIFE Kit. The LIFE Kit is a resource manual, which addresses literacy in combination with the day-to-day needs of adult neo-literates, and empowerment issues of women, especially in underserved rural areas. The LIFE Kit's modules link the learner's literacy to their social and economic betterment. Topics include health, HIV/AIDS, nutrition and hygiene, as well as mother-child literacy, intergenerational learning, responsible citizenship, and culture and heritage.

UNESCO is grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with NIOS on the LIFE Kit. We are thankful to Mr. M. C. Pant, Chairman, NIOS as well as Mr. D. S. Bist, Secretary, and Dr. Anita Priyadarshini, Deputy Director, for their support in the development of this Kit. We are excited about its wider usage in India and eventually in other countries of South Asia, and hope it will have a transformative impact on the lives of people through the empowerment that literacy can bring.



**Minja Yang**

*Director and UNESCO Representative*



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# Introduction

## Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE): A UNESCO-NIOS Collaboration

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is committed to global literacy, and it works with governmental and non-governmental bodies in the Literacy Initiative For Empowerment (LIFE) programme. UNESCO has partnered with the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) to develop this LIFE Kit. NIOS is a government organization working to promote education through open and distance learning. It is the largest open school in the world and offers courses for neo-literates as well as for the secondary and senior secondary levels.

Dear Teachers:

Welcome to the LIFE Kit! This resource kit is designed to empower neo-literate learners undertaking non-formal education. It is based on the belief that literacy is essential for social and economic participation and to improve the quality of life.

The power of literacy can be shown by a story about Heena:

Her parents got her married at a very young age and she only studied up to Class I. When her daughter was born, Heena decided to give her a good education. Her husband agreed, and soon her daughter was in school. One day Heena's daughter asked her for help with her homework. Heena looked at the book, but it made no sense to her. She had forgotten all that she had learnt. Her daughter said, "But Ma, why can't you help me? Rosa and her mother study together." Heena felt sad and decided that for her daughter's sake she should restart her education.

She enrolled at the Continuing Education Centre in her village, and the facilitators there helped her to start learning again. Heena found other women like her at the Centre. They were all greatly motivated, and as she began to read and write again, she discovered a new sense of pride and confidence.

Today, Heena and her daughter study from Class V books and they laugh at the stories together. Sometimes Heena teaches her daughter, and at other times her daughter helps her. They enjoy a new companionship based on a love for learning!

Like Heena, a person can start studying when she is already a mother, or can learn a skill while working. The LIFE Kit helps in four ways. First, knowledge helps us understand ideas and builds confidence. With facts and up-to-date information, it is easier to improve the way we live, eat, take care of our health and our families, all of which improves the quality of our lives.

Second, the LIFE Kit promotes vocational education related to local crafts, cottage industries and other skills for self-employment. It explains people's rights, relevant laws, and the government schemes set up to help them.

Third, the LIFE Kit aims to enrich knowledge and understanding about different people, their traditions, culture and heritage, to help communities live together in greater harmony.

And fourth, the LIFE Kit increases awareness about events in the world and shows us the difference between myth and reality. India is a democracy, and it is important to understand issues in order to participate in the political process with full awareness.



## Who Can Use the LIFE Kit

The target groups for the LIFE Kit have the following characteristics:

- Trainers/facilitators of neo-literates
- People aged 15+
- 10-grade educational background
- More rural than urban
- Women
- Mother tongue users.

## About the LIFE Kit

The LIFE Kit is divided into the following modules:

**Module 1: Literacy for Harmonious Living**

**Module 2: Literacy for Safe Motherhood**

**Module 3: Literacy for Healthy Childhood and Adolescence**

**Module 4: Literacy for Economic Empowerment and Responsible Citizenship**

**Module 5: Literacy for Enhancing Life Skills**

**Module 6: Literacy for Understanding Culture and Heritage**

Additional modules will be added periodically to enhance the Kit.

Each module can be read alone or as a part of the set. It contains:

- Stories and case studies
- Exercises and activities
- Illustrations
- Tables
- Boxes and glossaries to explain difficult terms.

## About this Module

Children are our future. They can achieve their ambitions only if we prepare them well, with full faith and confidence in them, giving all boys and girls equal and adequate opportunities to develop.

This module deals with issues such as providing a nutritious and balanced diet, proper personal hygiene, education and adequate medical attention. We also address gender discrimination and its likely consequences for family, society and the nation, along with social problems such as child labour and child marriage.

We are a young country in terms of the age of our population, a large proportion being adolescents. Adolescence is a period of immense opportunities as well as challenges. Since many physical, biological, psychological and social changes take place during this period, it is necessary to deal with these challenges firmly but gently. In this module, we have attempted to provide a better understanding of these issues.

Happy Learning!

Best wishes

**UNESCO-NIOS Team**



# Literacy for Healthy Childhood and Adolescence

## Section 1: Healthy Childhood

*Savita stepped off the bus and was delighted to see her niece, Sujata, and nephew, Rahul.*

*She had come to visit her sister, Radha.*

*As she hugged the children, Radha smiled and said, "Didi, I have taken good care of them. I give them healthy, nutritious food, make sure they are immunized regularly and have plenty of exercise. I have taught them good personal hygiene."*

### ➤➤ Nutritious Food

Like Radha's children, all children need nutritious food so that they can grow up strong and healthy. Let us see what this means:

Nutritious food is that food which has all the nutrients needed for normal growth. Nutrients consist of the following:

- ☛ **Carbohydrates** for energy – these are available in wheat, rice, ragi and bread.
- ☛ **Fats**, also for energy – we get fats from ghee, butter, oil, milk and cheese.
- ☛ **Proteins** for growth – these are found in dals, eggs, fish, meat, milk, gram and nuts.
- ☛ **Vitamins and minerals** for healthy growth and for protection against diseases – fresh vegetables and fruits, especially green leafy vegetables are the best source of vitamins and minerals. For example, spinach has plenty of iron which is needed for normal blood levels. Green vegetables, milk, ragi and gram provide calcium to give us strong bones and teeth.
- ☛ **Roughage** gives us regular bowel movements and prevents constipation – whole wheat flour (atta), beans, vegetables and fruit have plenty of roughage.
- ☛ **Water** is necessary for good digestion and for the circulation of the blood.



It is very important that everyone, especially growing children, should have a balanced diet.

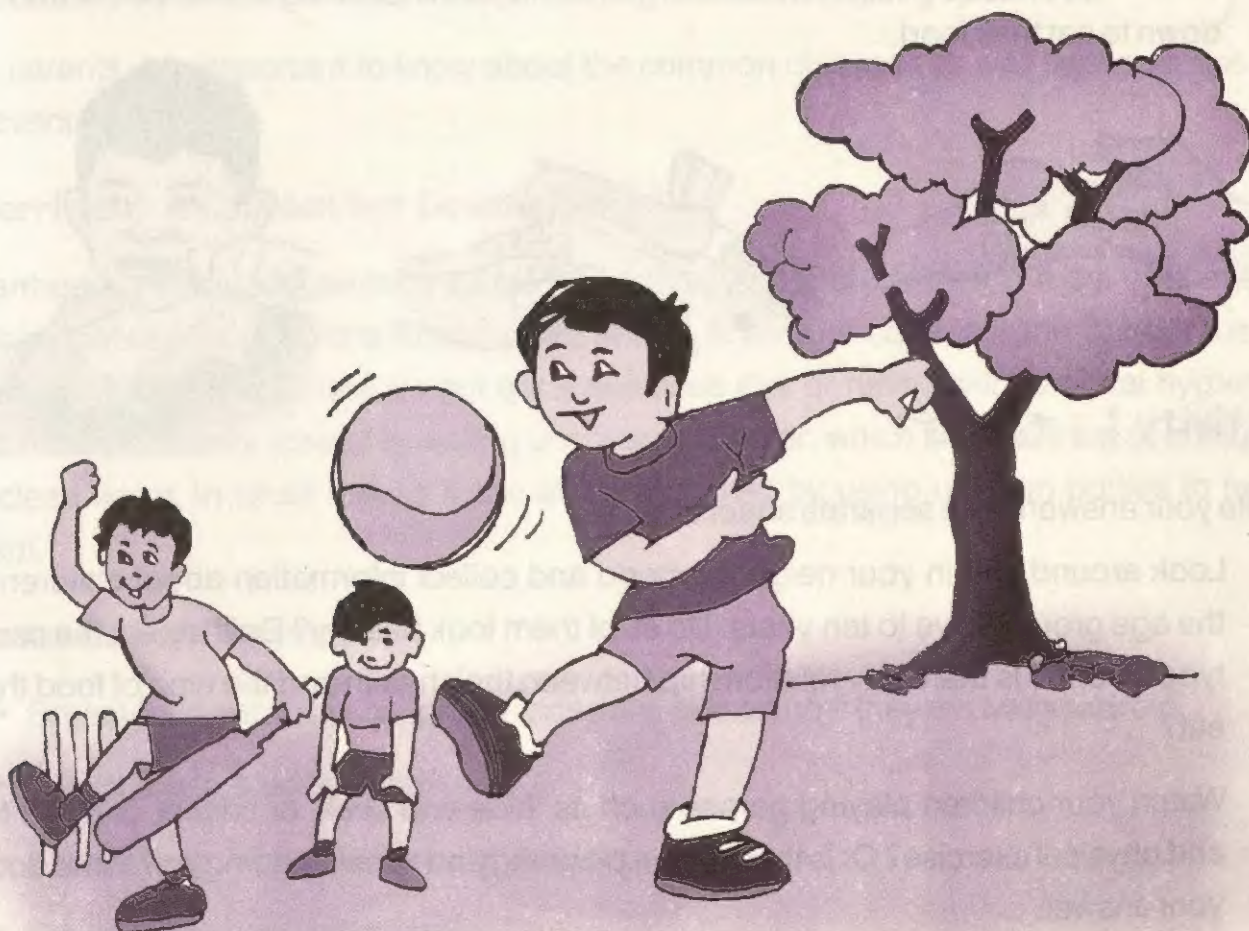
*A **balanced diet** is one that provides all the essential nutrients in the right quantities and proportions.*

## ➤➤ Games and Exercises for a Healthy Body and Mind

Games and exercise are very important for physical growth and development. Children should be encouraged to take part in indoor and outdoor games.

Besides physical growth, games and exercises also develop the mind. Children plan and think even as they play. Games sharpen the thinking process.

Another valuable aspect of playing games is that they help in the social and emotional development of the child. Interacting with each other on the playing field helps children to learn how to deal with each other. Games teach children good values such as team spirit, healthy competition, determination and much more.





## ➤ Good Personal Hygiene

*As Radha began to serve the food, she looked at her children and said, "I hope you have washed your hands."*

*"Yes of course," said Rahul. "I always wash my hands before eating."*

*"So do I," added his sister.*

Personal hygiene means keeping the body clean and observing clean habits. It is the parents' duty to teach their children good personal hygiene.

Children have to be taught to:

- Brush their teeth regularly, every morning and at night before going to sleep.
- Bathe every day and wear clean clothes.
- Cut their nails and keep them clean.
- Wash their hair regularly.
- Clean their ears.
- Wash their hands with soap or ash and water after using the toilet and before they sit down to eat their food.



### Activity 1



Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Look around you in your neighbourhood and collect information about children in the age group of five to ten years. Do all of them look healthy? Do they eat the same type of food? Is there any relationship between their health and the type of food they eat?
2. Watch your children playing games such as 'hide and seek' or cricket. Is it just fun and physical exercise? Or is there some planning and thinking going on? Write down your answer.
3. List five things you must do to maintain hygiene in your children.



## Section 2: Children's Diseases and Their Prevention

### ➤ Environmental Cleanliness – The Need

*“Your house is very clean,” Savita told Radha.*

*“Well Didi, I have two growing children in the house and so I am very particular about cleanliness both inside and outside the house. Don’t you remember how we had to rush Rahul to the hospital when he got diarrhoea as a baby? It was very frightening. Even now I make sure that the immunization schedule is followed strictly so that the children are protected against diseases and they remain healthy.”*

Do you keep your house and surroundings clean? Many people clean their homes but throw their garbage outside. Sometimes people eat fruits and throw the peels on the road. Such habits create a dirty environment.

Environmental hygiene is as important as personal hygiene for good health. A dirty environment attracts flies, rats, cockroaches and other insects that spread diseases. Small children particularly, are at high risk and fall sick easily. Most of the major diseases are caused by drinking unsafe water, breathing unclean air, eating spoilt food.

As parents, it is important to know about the common diseases as well as the means to prevent them.

### Diarrhoea: A Common but Deadly Illness

Diarrhoea is the most common cause of death in young children. It is most frequent in babies between six months to two years of age. It is more common and dangerous in children who are weak and do not get a nutritious diet or have poor personal hygiene. Diarrhoea is usually spread by eating uncovered food on which flies have sat or drinking unclean water. In small babies it can also be caused by using unclean bottles to feed them.

### Prevention of Diarrhoea

- ☛ Breast-feed babies for as long as possible, at least until they are two years old.
- ☛ Do not bottle-feed the infant.
- ☛ Ensure that children eat enough nutritious food.
- ☛ Do not leave food uncovered.



- ☛ Use safe drinking water.
- ☛ Keep the surroundings clean.

Passing more than three watery stools a day is considered as an attack of diarrhoea. When children get diarrhoea, they pass watery stools and may even vomit. Diarrhoea makes the body lose water and minerals. This causes dehydration, which if not treated, can even result in death.

### Remember

The most important treatment for diarrhoea is to replace the water and minerals that are lost when the child passes frequent watery stools or vomits excessively.

- ☛ Give the child plenty of water, breast milk, soup, tea, coconut water, dal and rice water, at regular intervals.
- ☛ Give the child Oral Rehydration Solution (ORS) which is easily available at the local health centres and at chemist shops. It can also be prepared at home.
- ☛ Give the child food (semi-solid foods like daliya, khichdi, sattu) as soon as he or she can take it. Food gives the body strength to fight against diseases.



#### *To Make ORS at Home:*

- *Boil one litre of water and cool it.*
- *Add one pinch of salt and one handful of sugar.*
- *Stir it and keep it covered.*
- *ORS once prepared should be consumed within 24 hours.*
- *Prepare a fresh lot each day.*

## ➤➤ Some Children's Diseases

Besides diarrhoea, there are many other diseases that can affect young children. They are caused due to several reasons, and have different symptoms. The chart below gives details of some of these diseases and the means to prevent them.



## Diseases of Children: Their Signs and Symptoms, Prevention and Control

Disease	Signs and Symptoms	Prevention and Control
Hepatitis/Jaundice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever with chills</li> <li>• Headache and weakness</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Vomiting</li> <li>• Yellow coloured urine and excessive sweating</li> <li>• Eyes and skin look yellow</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal hygiene and sanitation</li> <li>• Proper disposal of faeces</li> <li>• Safe drinking water</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: Hepatitis vaccine</li> </ul>
Polio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever and weakness</li> <li>• Loss of appetite and vomiting</li> <li>• Pain and stiffness in the neck</li> <li>• Weakness of the limbs and muscles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good personal hygiene and sanitation</li> <li>• Proper disposal of faeces</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: Polio vaccine</li> </ul>
Tuberculosis (TB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent cough for more than 3 weeks</li> <li>• Fever, chest pain</li> <li>• Loss of weight</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Blood in the sputum and vomiting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good personal hygiene and sanitation</li> <li>• Proper disposal of sputum</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: BCG vaccine</li> </ul>
Tetanus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of injury</li> <li>• Fever</li> <li>• Painful spasms in the muscles</li> <li>• Rigidity and twitching of the muscles</li> <li>• Difficulty in opening the mouth (locked jaw)</li> <li>• Irritation to bright light</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clean all wounds immediately and thoroughly</li> <li>• Injection of tetanus vaccine after any injury</li> <li>• Good personal and environmental sanitation</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient and treatment at the hospital</li> <li>• PREVENTION: Tetanus toxoid vaccine</li> </ul>



Disease	Signs and Symptoms	Prevention and Control
Measles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever with rashes on the skin</li> <li>• Loss of weight, weakness and diarrhoea</li> <li>• Pneumonia</li> <li>• Infection in the ears</li> <li>• Convulsions (fits)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community awareness</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: Measles vaccine</li> </ul>
Rubella (German Measles)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low-grade fever</li> <li>• Sore throat</li> <li>• Rash on the face, pinkish in colour</li> <li>• Enlargement of the glands in the neck area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community awareness</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: MMR vaccine</li> </ul>
Mumps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever with enlargement of the neck glands</li> <li>• Swelling of the face</li> <li>• Difficulty in swallowing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community awareness</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: MMR vaccine</li> </ul>
Typhoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever for 3-4 weeks</li> <li>• The fever follows a pattern</li> <li>• Bodyache and loss of appetite</li> <li>• Blood in the stool and pain in the abdomen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good personal hygiene and sanitation</li> <li>• Do not eat fruit that has been cut and left for a long time</li> <li>• Proper disposal of faeces</li> <li>• Safe drinking water</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: TAB vaccine</li> </ul>
Diphtheria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fever and sore throat</li> <li>• Pneumonia</li> <li>• Loss of appetite</li> <li>• Loss of weight</li> <li>• Bleeding from the nose</li> <li>• Difficulty in swallowing</li> <li>• Convulsions (fits)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good personal hygiene and sanitation</li> <li>• Isolation of the patient</li> <li>• PREVENTION: DPT vaccine</li> </ul>







## Section 3: Education for Young Minds

### ➤ The Importance of Education

*"We were lucky," Savita said. "Both our parents were educated and insisted that we also got the best education available. I am happy with my job as it helps me earn a living. It has given me so much confidence."*

*Radha agreed, "I am very grateful to our parents for educating us. Do you remember how Amma used to put both of us on her lap and teach us how to count? It is because of Amma that I am very particular about my children's education."*



All children need an education for a healthy and respectable life. It is the responsibility of both father and mother to ensure that their children receive a good one.

The government has introduced adequate opportunities to provide education for all. It is a fundamental right of every child. The law in India gives free and compulsory education for all children in the age group of six to fourteen years.

#### **Education is Important for Children because:**

- ☛ The child's personality and talents are developed.
- ☛ The mental and physical abilities of the child are strengthened.
- ☛ There is greater respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.
- ☛ The child is better prepared to lead a responsible life.
- ☛ Understanding, peace, tolerance and equality are created between the genders.
- ☛ An educated person has better opportunities to earn a livelihood.



## Educational Facilities to Promote Schooling

The government has tried to provide many different facilities so that no child is left uneducated. These include:

- ☛ Early Child Care Education Centres (anganwadis and balwadis) for all children aged three to six years.
- ☛ Formal schools for primary, upper primary and secondary levels.
- ☛ Open schools and alternate schools for out-of-school children.
- ☛ Technical and vocational training institutes.

### ➤ Anganwadi

The anganwadi is a courtyard centre for infants, young children, adolescent girls, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

It is a centre where services are provided for improving the nutritional and health status of children up to the age of six years. This programme is run through the anganwadi worker under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Programme of the government.

The anganwadi introduces children to the joys of learning and prepares them for further schooling. In such centres children receive the following facilities:

- ☛ They learn how to play, share toys, sing, draw and also learn the alphabet and numbers. It is a happy, relaxed place for children to develop their skills.





☛ Children are served additional food that helps in providing all the nutrients needed by growing children.

☛ The growth of the children is monitored regularly.

☛ The immunization schedule is followed.

☛ Regular health check-ups are provided for the children, so that problems, if any, can be detected at an early stage and timely treatment can be given.

☛ If a child has a medical problem which cannot be treated at the anganwadi, parents are guided to seek better health care facilities.



*The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Programme of the government focuses on providing services related to childcare, nutrition, immunization and non-formal pre-school education.*

## ➤➤ Formal Schooling

Formal schools are the largest providers of education in the country. These schools offer primary education up to Class V, upper primary up to Class VIII, secondary up to Class X and Senior Secondary up to Class XII. In such schools, children attend classes every day, interacting with their teachers and peers. They are taught according to a set curriculum and examinations are held at regular intervals.

Schools help children to gain knowledge and all-around development. In order to promote education, the government provides midday meals that are served in schools. There are many schemes by which free uniforms and textbooks are provided to schoolchildren. The community, especially mothers, are closely involved in keeping a control on these schemes.

In India, the schooling system provides for education up to Class XII. **Parents should ensure that their children do not drop out of school before achieving this level.**

### ***Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)***

*The SSA is a programme of the Government of India which aims at ensuring that all children in the age group of six to 14 years have access to a primary school, upper primary school or an alternative educational facility. The SSA helps schools to improve the quality of teaching and provides proper buildings, toilets, drinking water, blackboards, and playground facilities, as required. The community has an important role to play in the implementation of this scheme.*

## **➤ Open Schooling**

Despite the best facilities offered through formal schooling, there are many children who drop out of school. This may be for different reasons. It is important to remember that even if a child cannot go to a formal regular school, there are other alternatives available.

The government has set up open schools at the national and state levels to offer education to those who cannot go to school. Learners can study from the primary up to the senior secondary level at such open schools where they have the freedom to choose their own subjects, as well as to decide when they would like to appear for their examinations. They can study at home as well as while doing a job. Boys and girls in remote areas can avail themselves of an education through open schools. They are also useful for children and adults who belong to a migratory population.

### ***National Institute of Open Schooling( NIOS)***

*Open Basic Education Programmes are offered through NIOS at three levels: A, B and C, equivalent to Classes III, V and VIII, respectively, of formal schools. NIOS also offers secondary and senior secondary levels through open and distance education. There is no upper age limit for studying through NIOS.*

## **➤ Literacy and Continuing Education**

The government runs literacy programmes for adults through the National Literacy Mission. Under these programmes, the Zilla Saksharta Samiti conducts literacy classes for neo-literates at Continuing Education Centres (CECs). The activities at the CECs are facilitated by motivators called preraks. Learners are taught reading and writing as well as vocational skills. CECs are also information centres, where neo-literates and other community members can find out about different government programmes.



Equivalency Programmes for continuing their education through open schooling are also conducted for neo-literates at CECs.

Vocational courses are taught through the Jan Shikshan Sansthan. The literacy programmes in the states are provided academic support by the State Resource Centres.

### ***Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)***

*Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS), originally conceived as a scheme of the Shramik Vidyapeeths by the Government of India, is a programme of adult education for workers in urban and industrial areas. Each JSS is conceived as an institute for upgrading skills through non-formal, adult and continuing education. It provides academic and technical support to Zilla Saksharta Samitis in both urban and rural areas. Additionally, it organizes training programmes for key resource persons and master trainers in vocational courses under the scheme of continuing education for neo-literates.*

### ***National Literacy Mission (NLM)***

*The NLM was set up by the government with the goal of achieving literacy in the country. The success of the NLM is shown in the large number of girls and women who have become literate through literacy campaigns.*

## **Activity 3**



1. Mention one educational facility available for those people who cannot go to school.
2. What are the different types of programmes that are conducted at CECs?

## Section 4: Equal Opportunities for Girls and Boys

*Savita and Radha were sitting at home when Rahul arrived with a box of sweets. "From where did you get it?" asked Radha. "I got it from Aunty Aruna's house. They are celebrating, as Indu has got a baby brother," Rahul replied.*

*Radha remarked, "Two years ago when Indu was born, there were no celebrations. In fact, Indu's grandparents were very sad because a girl had been born, and today they are celebrating because a boy has been born. Isn't it unfair and sad?"*

*Savita said, "We are very lucky that our parents did not differentiate between boys and girls and gave both of us so much love and care."*



**Gender discrimination** means making a **distinction** between girls and boys in which usually girls are **looked down upon** just because they are girls and for no other reason. They are not given equal opportunities or equal respect, nor are they given equal rewards for the work they do as compared to boys.

In many communities, there is discrimination between boys and girls, starting from birth. Mothers giving birth to a girl are treated like outcasts, while the birth of a baby boy is celebrated. The girls are given poor nutrition, medical aid and treatment. They are ignored and treated like a curse – they grow up feeling that their lives are worthless.

But in reality girls and boys are like two wheels of a cart. If one is big and one is small then the cart will overturn. This is why both should have equal opportunities to grow.



You have seen many advertisements in newspapers or television, showing men and women in a particular manner. A woman will be shown cooking, while a man is sitting and reading.

*Gender refers to the roles and responsibilities of men and women that are related in our families, communities and cultures.*

Girls and boys are alike and yet people see them differently. Girls are trained to look after the home, be obedient and take care of children, whereas boys are trained to take decisions, get educated and find jobs even outside their villages. These kinds of attitudes result in **gender stereotype**.

However, nowadays we have seen that when girls are given equal chances they often outshine boys, coming first in examinations, winning gold medals and getting the top jobs in large companies, banks and in the financial and service sectors.



*Gender stereotype means that people have a fixed idea in their minds of what a man and a woman can and should do and what they cannot and should not do without any justification or logic.*

### Girls in All Strata of Society Should be Provided with:

- Equal attention, love and affection along with boys.
- The same quantity and quality of food, clothing and medical attention as are provided to boys.
- Equal opportunities in education as boys.
- Similar toys to play with as boys.
- Equivalent tasks to perform as boys.
- Equal opportunities to speak and express their opinions as boys.

### Activity 4

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What do we mean by gender discrimination?

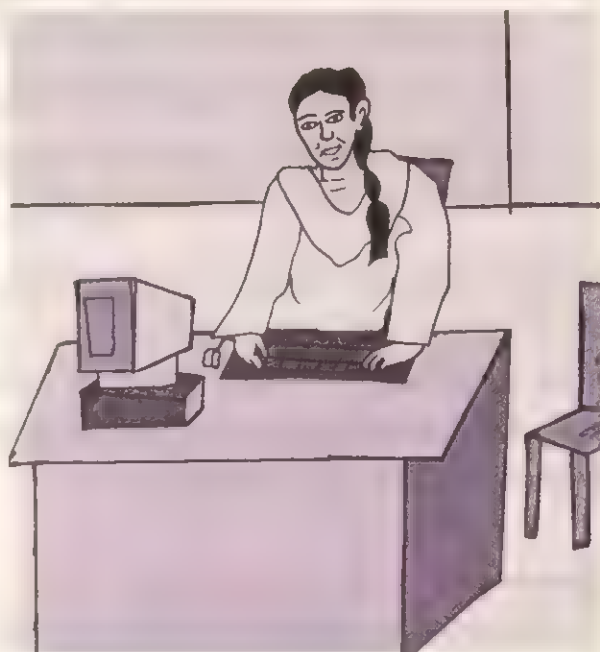
2. What do we mean by gender stereotype?
3. Make a list of examples from your life of discrimination against women. Note down what happened and what you can do to prevent it.

## ➤➤ The Importance of Educating Girls

There is a famous saying: Educate a man you educate an individual; educate a woman you educate a family.

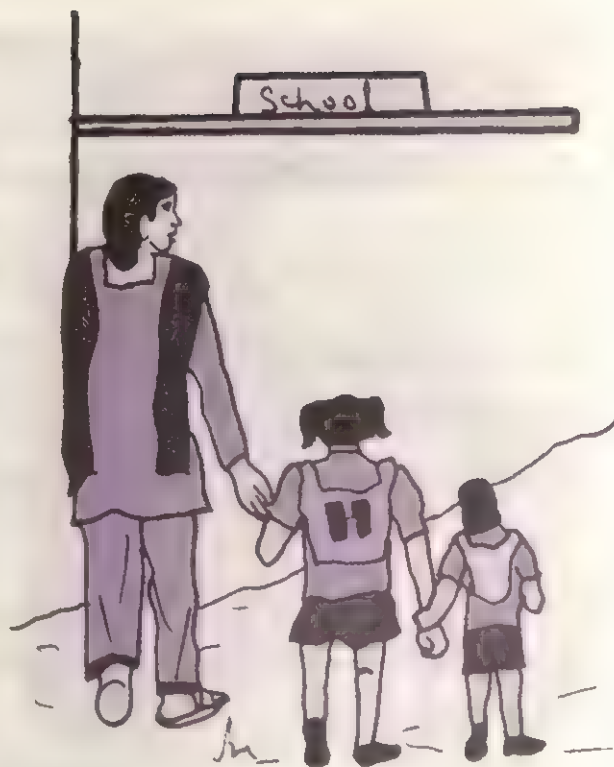
The education of girls is very important because:

- ☛ Education helps a woman to get information, knowledge and training to develop her skills.
- ☛ It makes a woman confident. She believes in herself and is able to understand and judge social and political issues.
- ☛ It gives a woman the ability and independence to take decisions that affect her life.
- ☛ An educated woman knows her rights and duties.
- ☛ She can become a skilled worker, get good jobs and even start her own business.
- ☛ Education encourages a woman to take part in political activities, like becoming a member of a panchayat, municipal corporation or legislature.
- ☛ It prepares a woman for leadership roles in the family and society.
- ☛ Education helps to raise the age of marriage thus reducing the number of deaths of mother and child during childbirth.





- It has a direct effect on women's health. Literate women improve the diets of their children and family and get medical help early during illnesses.
- An educated woman has a smaller family.
- An educated woman will make sure all her children are educated and will try to see that they get a better and higher level of education than she got, thus ensuring the progress of her family.



Women and girls need to be respected. We should not discriminate between girls and boys. Both are important pillars of society and they should respect each other. Men and women are equal partners, and together they can contribute to society.

*Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) is a scheme launched by the government for setting up residential schools at the upper primary level for girls, especially those belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Minority Communities.*

### Some Young Women Achievers



**Burkha Dutt**  
Famous television  
personality



**Sania Mirza**  
World-ranked  
international tennis  
player



**Kalpana Chawla**  
Well-known astronaut

## Activity 5



Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Why is it important to send girls to school? Give five reasons.
2. Why do many girls in rural areas not get an education?
3. Read the examples given below. What do they indicate?
  - a. A woman cleaning the house, while the man is relaxing in a chair.
  - b. Women sitting on the floor, while men are seated on chairs.
  - c. Men engaged in physically active pastimes, such as rock climbing or horse riding, but women are never shown in this way.
4. Have you ever suffered from gender discrimination? If yes, mention two examples.



## Section 5: Legal Protection for Children

### ➡ Child Labour

Every child needs love and affection, proper food, medical care and education. Childhood should be a happy period and children should have time and opportunity for play and recreation. They should be protected from exploitation. As a result of poverty and the ignorance of parents, many children are forced to work as child labourers. They work as domestic help and some are even employed on farms. Small business places like dhabas, cycle repair shops and vegetable shops use children as helpers. Some children are employed by factories performing jobs that are dangerous and harmful to their health. Girls are often forced to leave school and look after the home and younger children.



### Violence Amongst Children

Once widely considered an adult problem, anger and violence are fast becoming childhood problems. The violence they display may have many causes: anxiety, stress, being refused one's demands, failure in an examination or pressure from friends. This is a major problem that requires the complete attention of teachers, parents and society. It is our duty to teach our children to manage anger, violence and other emotions.

### Some Important Laws Protecting Children

Childhood is a time for learning, playing and growing up. It cannot be destroyed by forcing children to work. This is why the government has made several laws to protect children.

There are laws that ban the employment of children below the age of 14 years in factories, mines and places that are harmful to health. Recently, the government has banned child labour in hotels and as domestic help.

Some of these laws are given below:

- The Employment of Children's Act, 1938 bans employment of children below 14 years in dangerous occupations.
- The Factories Act, 1948 bans the employment of children in factories.
- The Bidi and Cigar Workers Act, 1966 bans children under 14 from working in the bidi and cigarette industry.
- The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933 bans parents from promising to offer the labour of their children in place of repayment of loans that they take from their employers and other people.
- The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act has recently been changed to ban children under 14 years of age to work as domestic help and at dhabas and eateries.

In spite of these laws, many children still work as labourers. It is essential for every adult to understand that children are our future generation and they must be well looked after.

## **Child Abuse**

Child abuse can be defined as causing or permitting any harmful or offensive contact against a child's body, and any communication or action that humiliates, shames or frightens a child. Major types of child abuse include: physical abuse, such as beating or punching; sexual abuse, like touching the genitals, incest or rape; and emotional abuse – verbal abuse, or threatening or frightening a child.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Another problem often faced by girls is sexual harassment. It includes sexually coloured remarks; physical contact and advances; showing pornography; a demand for sexual favours; and any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct that is sexual in nature. Our government has strict laws to prevent sexual harassment and we should bring such cases to the notice of the concerned agencies.

## **Trafficking**

Trafficking involves hiring or transporting young girls and boys to place them in a situation of exploitation. They are forced into prostitution and undergo slavery-like practices such as bonded labour and cruel treatment from employers for whom they work as domestic help.



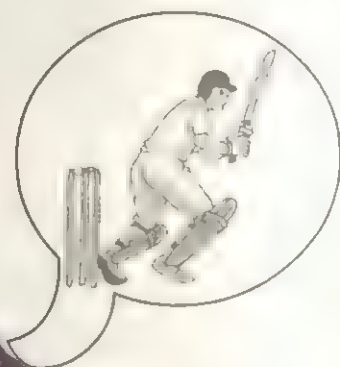
## ➤➤ Protection Against Child Marriage

*Savita recalled their friend Meena in their village. "Meena left school because she was married off at the age of 14 years," she told Aruna. "Don't you remember how strange we felt when Meena came back to the village next year to have a baby? She was still a child herself."*

There are many girls like Meena who are married before the age of 18 years. This is against the law. Several girls are forced to drop out of school and cannot complete their education. As a result, they can only get poorly paid manual and unskilled work.

## ➤➤ Laws that Prevent Child Marriage

The government changed the Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929 in 1979 to raise the minimum age of marriage for girls from 15 to 18 years and for boys from 18 to 21 years. Thus the legal age for marriage in India is 18 years for women and 21 years for men. Any marriage of a person younger than this is banned in India and **any person found guilty of going against this Act is liable to be punished.**



## Activity 6

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Name four laws that the government has introduced to prevent child labour.
2. What is the legal age of marriage for boys and girls?
3. Have you ever come across children in dangerous work situations? If yes, mention two cases.



## Section 6: Adolescence: A Period of Growth and Change

*The children joined Savita and Radha as they entered the house. Savita looked at them and thought, "They have reached adolescence. It will be such a difficult time for them. I wonder how Radha will deal with it? I remember our own adolescence. If Amma had not explained everything to us, we would have been very confused."*

**Adolescence** is the period between childhood and adulthood and lasts from the age of 10 to 19 years. Many changes – physical, mental, emotional and sexual – take place in the bodies of boys and girls during adolescence. Adolescence is a stage of confusion and mental turmoil.

Adolescents are the future human resources of our country and make up a large proportion of our population. This is a period of great opportunities as well as challenges.

As parents, it is important to understand this stage in a child's life so it can be handled with care and understanding. Moreover, since many physical, biological, psychological and social changes take place during this period, it is necessary to provide adolescents with correct and adequate knowledge and support so that they can take decisions based on facts regarding their health, education and social needs.



### ➤ Physical and Biological Changes during Adolescence

The first stage of adolescence is **puberty**, when physical and biological changes start gradually. Puberty begins earlier in girls than in boys.

**Puberty** is the period when the sexual features start developing. Puberty starts around the age of 10 years in girls and about 13 years in boys.

These changes are due to various **hormones** secreted by the ovaries in girls and the testes in boys. Hormones are substances given out by some organs of the body. During puberty sex hormones are produced and sexual development takes place as a normal part of growth. All adolescents need support and care during this transition to adulthood. Some children may even need special help.

This is a time when parents require plenty of patience. They need to show love and understanding. They must explain to their adolescent children about the hormonal changes taking place and reassure them that everything is normal.

**Physical Changes in Girls and Boys**

The following changes take place in girls and boys during adolescence, depending on their state of health and quality of nutrition:

Girls	Boys
Growth of bones leading to increase in height	Growth of bones leading to increase in height
Widening of hips due to the growth of the pelvic bones	Growth of moustache and beard, and voice change
Growth of pubic and auxiliary hair	Growth of pubic and auxiliary hair
Enlargement of breasts	Growth of testes and genitals
Onset of periods (menstruation)	Nocturnal emissions

**Behavioural Changes**

*As the two sisters discussed the children, Radha confided to Savita, “I really don’t know what to do with Rahul at times. He gets angry over the smallest things and is sometimes quite rude to me. He spends hours by himself in his room and sometimes does not even come to eat. He takes such a long time having a bath, changing his hairstyle and admiring the pictures of his heroes. He just wants to talk to his friends.”*

*Savita said, “Oh Radha, don’t worry, just be patient. He is an adolescent and will grow out of it.”*



Such behaviour is not uncommon. All of us have faced it or will face such situations. It is not restricted to boys alone. Even girls behave in a similar manner.



Social and Behavioural Changes	Emotional Changes Caused by
Attraction towards the opposite sex	Pressure from family and society
Frequent changes in mood	Pressure from friends
Conflict with parents and rebellious attitude	Stress of becoming a grown up
Irritation and impatience with others	Greater demands for performance at school
Inconsistent decision-making	Trying to develop an identity as an adult
Risk-taking behaviour	

## ➤ Why Does This Happen?

While physical changes are taking place in the body, psychological and emotional changes are also occurring in adolescent boys and girls. They want to be less dependent on their parents. They frequently do not listen to their parents' advice and become rebellious. They start dreaming about their future and building their hopes. They want to own things that their friends own and to be just like their friends, wearing what they wear, talking the way they talk and walking the way they walk. They develop the same interests and start having close friendships.

Most boys and girls are concerned about how they look and spend hours in front of the mirror admiring themselves or finding fault, comparing their bodies with those of their friends. All this may cause tension.

Since adolescents start thinking independently, they often believe that they think differently from others, that adults do not understand them and that they know best how to behave and what to do.

In addition, there is tremendous pressure from parents and society. Parents' expectations increase. They want the children to start sharing economic and family responsibilities. In many families, restrictions are placed on the clothes that girls can wear. In some families girls face several problems during menstruation. Remember, menstruation is a normal thing that has to happen as a girl grows up. It is just a sign that she is growing up normally.



## ➤ How Parents Can Help Adolescents

- ☛ During adolescence, children need to be supported.
- ☛ Parents need to spend a lot of time with their children and talk to them like friends.
- ☛ When they lack self-confidence and fear that their friends are smarter than them or have more friends than they have, parents should make their children feel good about themselves. Never give lectures to adolescents or talk down to them.



- ☛ Parents should instil good values in their children, and have confidence that they will follow these values.
- ☛ At this time, children move away from their parents so it is important that parents convince the children that they are their friends and will always be there to support and love them no matter what happens.

- ☛ Parents must avoid conflicts with their children.

- ☛ As they grow up, children try to avoid physical affection from their parents. Parents must remember that this is a passing phase and they themselves went through the same phase. As children grow older and the hormones settle down to a regular flow, this behaviour improves and conflicts decrease.



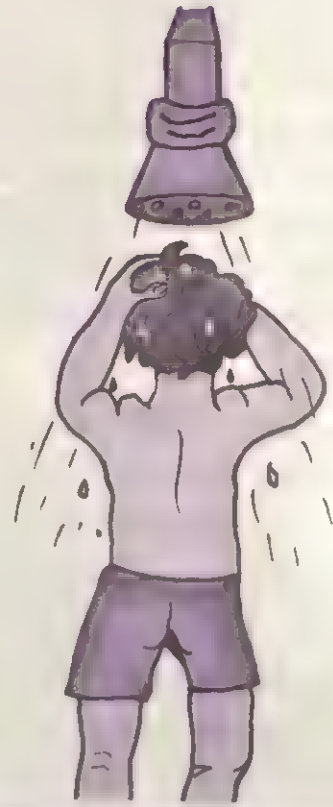
- ☛ This is the age when adolescents also start wanting to take on adult-type responsibilities such as opening and maintaining their own bank accounts, taking care of their own belongings, washing their own clothes, buying their own clothes, cooking their meals, repairing broken items and so on.



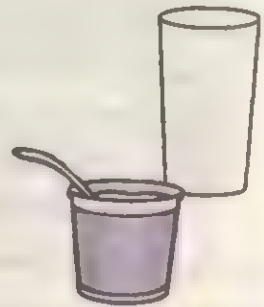
## Section 7: Issues of Importance for Adolescents

### ➤➤ Good Nutrition

A person's diet changes with age. It is not the same for all age groups, and it also depends on the sex of the person and the type of work (manual). Hence a person's diet depends on age, sex, health and occupation. Growing children need more food in proportion to their body weight. They need more proteins for growth, as well as more minerals and vitamins. As adolescent girls and boys are more likely to get anaemia because of growth spurt and menstruation (in girls), they need an extra amount of iron and calcium in their diet. Adolescents need energy, not only for their daily activities, but also for their growth. A balanced diet, consisting of all the nutrients in the correct proportions, is essential during this period.



*A person who has **anaemia** has less red blood cells. Such a person feels weak, tired and suffers from headaches.*



### ➤➤ Drug and Substance Abuse

Often, children get into wrong company during adolescence and begin experimenting – some begin smoking and drinking alcohol, while others may even experiment with drugs. They then get addicted to these substances. Smoking and drinking are harmful to the health and can cause diseases like cancer and heart problems. Drugs such as ganja,

charas, bhang, hafim and others that are injected are extremely dangerous. Addiction to these drugs destroys lives.

*Every parent must be very careful and watch that their child does not fall into bad habits. Parents must guide their children without appearing to interfere too much.*

## ➤➤ Reproductive Hygiene

Since adolescence is a period of physical changes, not only is it necessary to bathe every day and maintain personal hygiene, it is important to take care of the reproductive organs. They should be washed regularly and cleaned well while bathing. Proper hygiene must be maintained during menstruation. It is important to do this so that there is no infection of the genital parts and no danger of reproductive tract infections (RTIs). RTIs can be caused by having sexual relations with a person who suffers from the infection or by having sex with more than one person.

*The **reproductive tracts** are those parts of the body that are involved in the sex act and in producing a baby.*

Although both girls and boys can be infected, women are more likely to get reproductive tract infections than boys. This is because of the physical structure of girls' reproductive organs. Often proper information is not provided to girls and they do not get adequate medical help in time.

## ➤➤ Sexually Transmitted Infections, including HIV and AIDS

Adolescence is a period when children want to experiment and try out new things. They often lack adequate information and are insufficiently prepared to deal with situations of risk. One of the biggest dangers is that of HIV and AIDS. As a result of lack of awareness they may contract sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS.

### What are HIV and AIDS?

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) causes Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS). The virus attacks the white blood cells that protect us from diseases. In this condition a person's white blood cells are destroyed to such an extent that the body is unable to fight common infections such as a cold, diarrhoea, fever and tuberculosis. Thus, a person with AIDS will be affected by repeated severe infections.



A person infected by HIV can pass on the virus to another person through body fluids such as blood, semen, vaginal fluid and breast milk.

The Most Common Ways of Transmitting HIV	How HIV Does NOT Spread
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Unprotected sexual intercourse with an HIV-infected person.</li> <li>➤ Sharing injection needles with an HIV-infected person, which is often done by drug users.</li> <li>➤ Infected blood during blood transfusion.</li> <li>➤ From an HIV-infected mother to her baby during pregnancy, delivery, or after birth through breastfeeding.</li> <li>➤ Organ transplant from an infected person.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Through the air, food, water, mosquito bites, etc.</li> <li>➤ By using the same utensils as used by an infected person.</li> <li>➤ By having social contact with an infected person (meeting the person, sitting and talking to that person).</li> <li>➤ By kissing, hugging, shaking hands, sneezing or coughing.</li> <li>➤ By using the same computer, telephone, etc. used by an infected person.</li> <li>➤ By working with an infected person.</li> </ul>

## Preventing HIV Infection

To date there is no cure for HIV and AIDS. In fact prevention is the best protection for this disease. HIV can be prevented by:

- Avoiding many sex partners.
- Not having unprotected sex – always use a condom.
- Screening blood before transfusion.
- Not sharing injection needles, instruments for tattoo piercing or razor blades.
- Avoiding pregnancy if the woman has HIV (as it can be passed on to the unborn child).
- Educating people.

## HIV Test

HIV infection can be detected by a blood test known as the ELISA test. This test is available in many hospitals in most cities in India.

## Activity 7

Write your answers on a separate sheet of paper.

1. What is the age range for adolescence?
2. List three physical, social and emotional changes in boys and girls during adolescence.
3. What is HIV ? How can it be transmitted?
4. Mention four ways in which HIV is not transmitted.



## Section 8: Adolescents and Education

For a healthy society and a strong nation, it is necessary that all of us are educated. For this, it is necessary to educate all our children – girls as well as boys. There are many educational opportunities available at the school and higher levels.

### ➤ Educational Opportunities at the School Level

Adolescents must be motivated to complete their schooling. They can do this through either of the following:

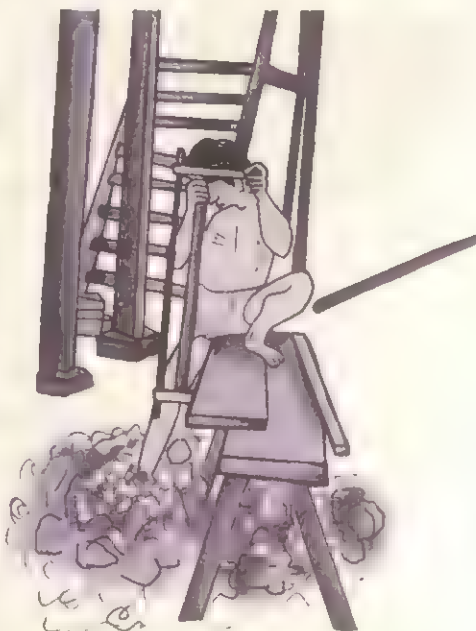
➤ Formal schooling

➤ Open schooling

Parents should encourage young people to join vocational courses as well as hobby courses.

### ➤ Educational Opportunities at Higher Levels

After completing schooling there are three options for young people – they can find a job, get self-employed or pursue higher education.



There are many universities and colleges where they can study the basic fundamental courses such as B.A., B.Com. or B.Sc. They can also try for admission to medical, technical or management programmes offered by most universities and several institutes. In addition, there are many need-based programmes, which are related to vocation and employment.

## ➤➤ **Technical Education Programmes**

Technical education is one of the significant components of human resource development. It plays an important role in the economic and technological development of India, by producing high-quality human resources, needed for various sectors and to provide essential services.

Responsible parents can help their children to become responsible adults. Such people will contribute, not only to their own family and community, but also to the nation.



## Glossary

- Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS):** A disease caused by human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) in which the body's immunity to fight against disease is reduced drastically.
- Adolescence:** Period between childhood and adulthood. It lasts from the age of 10 to 19 years.
- Anganwadi:** Courtyard Centre with facilities for educational and nutritional improvements. It caters to children below six, adolescents and mothers.
- Anaemia:** When there are less red blood cells in the body, a person feels weak, tired and suffers from headaches. This is called Anaemia.
- Balanced diet:** A diet that provides all the essential nutrients in the right quantities.
- Balwadi:** Playschool for young children that prepares them for a formal school. Children are usually admitted to a balwadi when they are three years old.
- Child marriage:** Marrying children before the legal age of marriage (18 years for girls and 21 years for boys).
- Dehydration:** Severe loss of water and minerals due to loose motions or vomiting.
- Diarrhoea:** A major childhood killer disease where the child has loose motions and vomiting, resulting in dehydration.
- ELISA test:** The test done to find out if a person has the HIV infection. It is available in all government hospitals free of cost.
- Environment:** All our surroundings – the earth, air, rivers and seas, plants and animals.
- Gender discrimination:** Women are looked down upon just because they are women and for no other reason.
- Gender stereotype:** The fixed idea in people's minds of what a man and a woman can do and cannot do without any justification or logic.
- Hormones:** Substances given out by some organs of the body which affect the working of other parts of the body.
- Hygiene:** The preservation and improvement of the health of the body and mind through clean and healthy practices.
- Immunization:** Giving weakened germs (antigens) in the form of injections or drops to increase the body's immunity to fight against diseases.
- Nutrients:** These consist of carbohydrates, fats, proteins, vitamins, minerals, roughage and water that are required for a balanced diet.
- Open Basic Education Programmes:** Programmes offered through the National Institute of Open Schooling meant for children and adults who cannot go to a formal school.
- Open schools:** Schools run by the government which provide flexibility and freedom to the learner. Students can study from home or even if they are employed.
- Oral rehydration solution (ORS):** A liquid containing salt and sugar in the required quantities used to replace the water and minerals lost during diarrhoea or vomiting.
- Puberty:** The period when the sexual features start developing in girls and boys. Puberty starts around the age of 10 years in girls and 13 years in boys.



**Reproductive Tract Infections (RTIs):** Infections of the reproductive tracts – those parts of the body that are involved in the sex act and producing a baby.

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** A government campaign for providing education.

**Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) :** Diseases transmitted by having sex with an infected person.

## ➤ **Answers to the Activities**

### **Activity 1**

2. Note the physical, mental as well as social aspects while the children are playing.
3. Brush teeth regularly; bathe every day; wear clean clothes; cut nails and keep them clean; wash hair regularly; wash hands with soap or ash and water when they come home, after using the toilet and before eating.

### **Activity 2**

1. Breastfeeding, no bottle-feeding, nutritious food for the child, keeping food covered, safe drinking water, clean surroundings.
2. Oral rehydration solution is given to a person to replace water and minerals that are lost due to diarrhoea or excessive vomiting. It is prepared by mixing a pinch of salt and a handful of sugar in one litre of boiled, cooled water.
3. Vaccines given to children to protect them from childhood diseases.

### **Activity 3**

1. Open Schools
2. Literacy, continuing education and vocational programmes.

### **Activity 4**

1. Gender discrimination means making a distinction between girls and boys in which usually girls are looked down upon just because they are girls and for no other reason. They are not given equal opportunities or equal respect, nor are they given equal rewards for the work they do as compared to boys.
2. Gender stereotype means that people have a fixed idea in their minds of what a man and a woman can and should do and what they cannot and should not do without any justification or logic.

### **Activity 5**

1. To develop: personality, talents, mental and physical abilities, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, understanding, peace, tolerance and equality between the genders. To prepare for a responsible life; to get better opportunities.
2. Domestic work; taking care of younger members of the family; parents following the ancient social traditions blindly; early marriage; they have to earn money; believe nothing is good for them in life; schools far from home.
3. Gender stereotype and gender discrimination.



### Activity 6

1. The Employment of Children's Act, 1938; The Factories Act, 1948; The Bidi and Cigar Workers Act, 1966; The Children (Pledging of Labour) Act, 1933; Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act.
2. 21 and 18 years, respectively.

### Activity 7

1. 10-19 years
2. Refer tables under "Physical Changes in Girls and Boys" and "Behavioural Changes"
3. Human Immunodeficiency Virus; Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. Avoid many sex partners; avoid unprotected sex; screen blood before transfusion; avoid sharing injection needles, instruments for tattoo-piercing and razor blades; avoid pregnancy if the woman has HIV; education.
4. Through the air, food, water or mosquito bites; using the same utensils; having social relations; kissing, hugging, shaking hands, sneezing, coughing; using the same computer or telephone; working with an HIV/ AIDS infected person.





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